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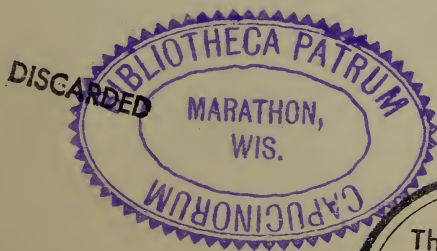
THE Great Reform

TRANSCENDENTAL HERALD PRESS

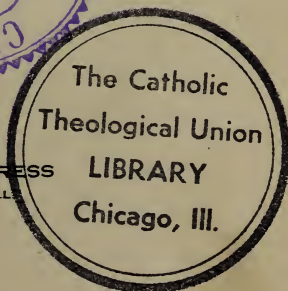
The Great Reform

or

Papal Pronouncements on the Third Order Secular of St. Francis



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of Pope Leo XIII

Concerning St. Francis and the Third Order

*To the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and
Bishops of the Catholic world in favor and communion
with the Apostolic See:*

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction:

By a fortunate coincidence it is granted the Christian world to celebrate within a brief interval the memory of two men, who, on being called to heaven to the eternal reward of their sanctity, left on earth, as if to renew unceasingly their virtues a glorious host of followers. Close upon the centennial commemoration of Benedict, the founder of the monks of the West, follows a no less signal occasion publicly to render homage to Francis of Assisi on the seventh centenary of his birth. Not without reason do We hold that this coincidence is a part of the loving designs of Providence. By offering Us the opportunity of celebrating the birthday of these great Fathers, God wishes seemingly to admonish the world to recall their supreme worth and to understand how wrong it was to molest the religious bodies founded by them, in the very countries where by their industry, genius, and endurance, they promoted civilization and prosperity.

We trust the festivities will not be without fruit for the Christian world, which has always and with good cause looked on the religious as their friends, and

which is now sparing no efforts to duplicate the loving and grateful tribute paid to the name of Benedict, with festive honors and manifold expression of attachment paid to the memory of Francis. Nor is this noble demonstration of homage and devotion limited to the place where the great Saint saw the light of day, or to the neighboring lands that were hallowed by his presence; but it extends far and wide to the bounds of the earth, wherever the name of Francis is known or his institutes flourish.

No one could view this well placed enthusiasm with greater satisfaction than We, particularly since from earthly youth We have always admired Francis of Assisi and cherished an exceptional devotion to him. We glory in Our membership in the Franciscan family, and in Our devotion We have cheerfully and often climbed the sacred heights of Mount La Verna, where at every step the image of that great man confronted Us, while the solitude, redolent of his memory, held Our mind wrapt in silent thought.

Leo's Devotion to Francis

Yet, commendable as is this enthusiasm, let it not be accounted everything. The honors intended for the Blessed Francis will find the readiest acceptance with him if they are profitable to us who render them. Now, solid and unfailing benefit will accrue to the faithful in so far as they rise to conformity with the man whose excellence they admire and strive to better their lives by following his example. As certainly as, by God's help, they succeed in the effort, so certainly will a timely and very effective remedy against the evils of our day have been found.

We would, therefore, Venerable Brethren, address this letter to you, not merely as a public testimonial of Our devotion to Francis, but as an appeal to your charity to co-operate with Us in promoting the welfare of mankind after the manner proposed.

Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, is the ever new and perennial fountainhead of whatever blessings devolve on us from the infinite goodness of God; so that, as he once saved the world, he will accomplish its salvation throughout all ages. For "there is no other name under heaven given to man whereby he must be saved." Whenever, therefore, as a result either of human weakness or malice, mankind lapses into corruption and stands in need of special assistance to extricate itself, it must resort to Jesus Christ as its chief and safest recourse. Such is His divine power and such is its efficacy, that in it are found the ward against all dangers and the remedy for all ills. Let but the world be brought back to the profession of Christian truth and to the evangelical precepts of life and the cure is certain.

Now, when conditions, such as We have indicated, obtain and the providential moment for applying the remedy arrives, God seems opportunely to raise up on earth a man who is, not merely one of the many, but distinguished by special worth, charging him with the task of restoring healthy social conditions. That is precisely what came to pass toward the end of the twelfth century and somewhat later; the instrument chosen to accomplish the mighty task, was Francis.

The spirit of that age with its virtues and vices is known well enough. The Catholic faith was quite deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and an inspiring spectacle it was to see so many, animated by the fervor of their piety, set out for Palestine bent on victory or death. Still, license had warped the morality of the people, and nothing was so generally necessary as a return to Christian sentiments. Now, the mainspring of Christian virtue is a self-sacrificing disposition, ready to bear with what is

hard and trying, the cast of which is in a manner outlined by the Cross, which those who seek to follow Christ must be content to shoulder. It is peculiar to this disposition to remain detached from perishable things, to keep oneself severely in check, and to bear misfortune with ease and moderation. Thus does the love of God and neighbor become of all virtues the mistress and queen. For it has the power to allay whatever annoyance is entailed by duty and to render even the greatest trials, not only bearable, but pleasant.

Of these virtues there was a sad deficiency in the twelfth century. Excessive was the number of those who, abandoning themselves to worldly interests, went mad with the craze for honors and wealth, or spent their days in luxury and debauchery. A handful of men wielded the most far-reaching power, and their prestige was generally directed toward the oppression of the wretched and despised multitude. Not even those who by their position should have served as a check to others, kept clear of the taint of these vices. Where Christian charity smoldered, plague spots in the various forms of envy, rivalry, and hatred cropped up daily, estranging and exciting all minds to such an extent that on the slightest provocation neighboring countries engaged one another in ruinous wars, while fellow citizens among themselves sought the inhuman issue of the sword.

Such were the times in which fell the life of Francis. Nevertheless, he began with wonderful perseverance and simplicity to hold up to a decadent world in word and deed the true ideal of Christian perfection. As a matter of fact, while in those days Father Dominic Guzman championed the integrity of the divine truths and dispelled with the light of Christian revelation the infamous errors of heresy, Francis, guided by God in his glorious achievements, succeeded in heartening

Francis's Providential Mission

the Christian world to a virtuous life, leading it back from a long and grievous aberration to the imitation of Christ. It was surely not by chance that those verses of the Gospel fell on the ears of the youthful Francis: "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff"; and again, "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me." Taking these words as addressed to him directly, he forthwith divested himself of all he possessed, changed his garments, made poverty his associate and companion for life, and determined to make this lofty ideal of virtue, which he embraced so magnanimously, the foundation of his order. From that moment, amid the widespread effeminacy and the extreme luxury of the age, he went about in mean and coarse apparel, begging his sustenance from door to door and, what is commonly regarded as the bitterest of trials, not only putting up with the raillery of the misguided populace, but courting it with wondrous avidity. He had espoused the folly of the Cross of Christ and found in it absolute wisdom; and as he learned to penetrate its august mysteries, he realized that nowhere could he gain greater glory.

Together with this love of the Cross, a most ardent charity pervaded the heart of Francis, animating him with the courage to undertake the propagation of the Christian religion and freely to expose himself in the cause to the manifest danger of death. His great charity embraced all men. Yet the needy and the downtrodden were especially dear to him. Indeed, he seemed to delight in occupying himself with those from whom others commonly fled or daintily kept aloof. In this way he did much to promote that universal brotherhood, the perfect ideal of which

***The True
Brotherhood
of Man***

Christ restored to the world, molding the human race into one great family under the common fatherhood of God.

With the aid of these virtues and particularly by his austere life, Francis, so pure of heart, did his utmost to realize in his person the image of Jesus Christ. But herein also the purpose of divine Providence is discernible that even in outward circumstances Francis bore certain striking resemblances to our divine Redeemer.

**Francis
and Christ**

Thus, he chanced like Jesus to see the light of day in a stable, and like Christ of yore to rest his infant limbs on a bed consisting of the straw-covered ground. Yes, it is said the resemblance at birth was completed by blithe angel choirs on high and sweet music floating on the breeze. Again, as Christ chose the Apostles, he gathered a number of disciples about him, charging them to go abroad into the world as heralds of Christian peace and eternal salvation. Abjectly poor, shamefully reviled, cast off by his own, he bore out the image of Christ Jesus even to the extent of refusing to own as much as a place where to rest his head. The final point of resemblance was attained when on the heights of Mount La Verna—his Calvary, so to speak,—the sacred stigmata were miraculously stamped on his body, a thing till then unheard of,—and he was in a manner crucified. We mention here a fact no less conspicuous as a miracle, than attested by the evidence of centuries. For, one day when Francis was wrapt in profound contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, seeking to sensate in his person and imbibe, as it were, their cruel painfulness, suddenly there appeared to him an angel come from heaven. By some mysterious power that presently emanated from the angel, Francis felt a pain as of his hands and feet being pierced with nails and his side being wounded with a sharp lance. As this

took place, a boundless ardor of love seized hold of his soul, and thenceforth he bore about in his body a living impression of the wounds of Christ.

These marvels, deserving rather the praise of angels than of men, are ample proof how exceptional a man was Francis and how well fitted for the divinely ordained task of reclaiming his contemporaries to a Christian life. It was truly more than a mere human voice which was heard by Francis in the church of St. Damian, saying, "Go and safeguard my crumbling house." No less remarkable was the vision divinely

Francis's Reception by the Public

vouchsafed to Innocent III, when he seemed to behold Francis supporting with his shoulders the tottering walls of the Lateran basilica.

The import of these marvels is quite plain. They conveyed that Francis would in those days be in no ordinary way a pillar and support of the Christian commonwealth. Nor was he slow to gird himself to the task. The twelve men who first submitted themselves to his direction, were like a humble seed which, by God's favor and the good will of the Supreme Pontiff, quickly grew to a most plentiful harvest. Disciplining them in virtue after the example of Christ, he assigned to them for evangelization the several parts of Italy and of Europe, giving to certain ones among them the commission to cross over into distant Africa. Presently indigent, unlettered, and rude as they were, they appeared before the public. At cross-roads and in public places, without any reliance on splendid surroundings or rhetorical display, they set about encouraging the people to despise worldly interests and to think seriously of the future life. It is wonderful what great results were achieved by workmen seemingly so unfit. The eager public flocked in crowds to hear them, forthwith repenting of their misdeeds, forgetting injuries, composing their quarrels,

and resuming peaceful pursuits. It is incredible with what attachment, not to say vehemence, the multitude was drawn toward Francis. Wherever he appeared on the scene, they thronged after him in vast numbers. Often enough the entire citizenry of towns and more populous cities begged in a body to be duly disciplined in his school.

This circumstance induced the great Saint to found the organization called the Third Order, which was to be open to every condition of life, to every age, and to both sexes, without breaking family or household ties. He gave the order a wise constitution, consisting not so much of rules of his own as of passages of the Gospel, which should assuredly not seem too hard to a Christian; for instance, the members were to obey the precepts of God and of the Church, to refrain from party contentions and quarrels, to respect the property rights of others, not to take up arms except for God and country, to observe moderation in food and dress, to do away with luxury, to avoid the dangerous lure of dances and plays.

It is easy to see that the greatest blessings were bound to result from an institution so wholesome in itself and so wonderfully suited to the age. How seasonable it was, is sufficiently proved by similar organizations, which grew out of the Dominican and other orders and by subsequent events. At any rate, all, from the lowest to the highest, hastened with burning eagerness and with the greatest enthusiasm to join this branch of the Franciscans. Louis IX, King of France and Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, were the first to seek the honor; and they were followed in the course of the ages by a long list of popes, cardinals, bishops, kings, and royal princes, all of whom regarded the Franciscan livery as quite compatible with their dignity.

The members of the Third Order proved their loyal and dauntless mettle in the defense of the holy faith; and if for their merits they incurred great enmity at the hands of the evil-minded, they never lacked the approval of the wise and good, which approval after all is the most creditable and alone desirable. Yes, Gregory IX, Our predecessor, publicly commending their loyalty and courage, did not hesitate to shield them with his authority and to distinguish them with the honorable title of Soldiers of Christ and New Macchabees. Nor was it empty praise. The order formed a

***Its Influence
on European
Civilization***

solid bulwark of public safety. Keeping in view the virtues and precepts of their Founder, the members did their utmost to resuscitate in society the glorious fruits of Christian morality. The fact is, by their influence and example, they often either laid or modified feuds; they snatched weapons from the hands of infuriated partisans; they removed the sources of strife and contention; they brought relief to the needy and desolate; they chastised luxury, that ravener of fortunes and pander to vices. Domestic peace and public tranquillity, integrity of life and kindness, the right use and management of property,—the best foundations of civilization and security,—spring from the Third Order of St. Francis as from their root, and it is to Francis that Europe is largely indebted for the preservation of these blessings.

More, however, than other nations does Italy owe to Francis. For, just as it was the chief theatre of his virtues, it was also his greatest beneficiary. In an age when there was much unjust contention on every side, the hand of Francis was ever outstretched toward the afflicted and prostrate. Rich in his extreme indigence, he never ceased to alleviate the wants of others, regardless of his own. Our newborn language uttered its

***Italy's Debt
to Francis***

sweet cradle-cry on the lips of Francis. He gave vent to the warmth of his charity and poetic feeling in hymns written for the edification of the public, which have been found worthy of the admiration of a more scholarly posterity. At the thought of Francis a more than human inspiration seems to have stirred the genius of our countrymen. For, the skill of our greatest masters has been at pains to reproduce his history in painting, sculpture, and engraving. Dante Alighieri found in Francis a theme for his powerful yet charmingly elegant verse; Cimabue and Giotto, a subject for immortal paintings worthy of a Parrhasius; celebrated architects, an inspiration for the magnificent structures reared at the tomb of the Poverello and at the church of St. Mary of the Angels, the scene of so many great marvels. To these temples people now repair from all quarters of the globe to render homage to Assisi's Father of the Poor, who, divesting himself of every human possession, enjoyed so fully and plenteously the blessings of divine bounty.

It is plain, therefore, that untold benefits accrued to Church and State from this one man. But because his spirit, thoroughly and eminently Christian as it is, meets the requirements of all times and climes, it cannot be doubted that the Franciscan movement will be of great benefit in our own age, the more so as the circumstances of our time in so many ways resemble those of his day. As in the twelfth century, so now divine charity is largely on the decline; and not less

***History Repeats
Itself***

sad is the perversion of the Christian sense of duty brought on partly through ignorance, partly through indifference. With a like hot haste and with like efforts ever so many are consuming their time in the pursuit of the comforts of life or in the eager quest of amusement. Lost in luxury, they squander what is theirs and reach out for the property of others.

Flourishing the idea of the brotherhood of man, they act a brother's part in word rather than in deed; for, their motive is self-love, and genuine charity toward the helpless and needy is vanishing daily more and more. In those days, the manifold errors of the Albigenses, rousing the populace to rebellion against ecclesiastical authority, disturbed the civil order as well and paved the road to a kind of socialism. Just so today the abettors and propagators of naturalism have multiplied apace, persistently denying the duty of obedience to the Church and gradually reaching out beyond all reason they harass civil authority as well, countenance violence and sedition, urge confiscation, pander to popular passions, and sap the foundations of domestic and public order.

Amid distressful conditions so manifold and so serious, you, Venerable Brethren, will readily understand that no small hope of relief could be placed in the rule of St. Francis, were it but restored to its former importance. With it would flourish faith and piety and all that is glorious in Christianity; the lawless craving for earth's perishable goods would be broken and —what is frequently regarded as the greatest and most hateful of burdens—people would no longer dread to put the bridle of virtue on their passions. Bound together by the ties of genuine brotherhood, people would love one another and manifest toward the needy and afflicted the reverence due them as representatives of Christ. Furthermore, once men are thoroughly imbued with the Christian religion, they feel the conviction that it is a matter of conscience to obey lawfully constituted authority, and that no one may be molested in any of his rights. Now, nothing will serve better than this conviction to root out the evils of that order, such as violence, disregard of rights, sedition, class hatred, all of which

***Why not the
Third Order
Now?***

evils are at once the mainsprings and the weapons of socialism. Finally,—a point over which economists are at such pains,—the relation between rich and poor will be successfully regulated. The conviction will gain ground that poverty is not without a dignity of its own; that, while the rich man is bound to be compassionate and bountiful, the poor man must be content with his lot and with the fruits of his labor; that, as neither of them is born to live for the passing goods of this world, the one must find his way to heaven by the road of patience, the other by the path of liberality.

For these reasons it has been Our earnest wish that all should do their best to follow the example of Francis of Assisi. Wherefore, in the past We have always devoted special attention to the Third Order of St. Francis; and now that by the great favor of God We have been called to the Supreme Pontificate and a favorable opportunity has presented itself, We do urge all Christians not to be behindhand in joining the ranks of this soldiery of Christ.

Here and there great numbers of both sexes are already following cheerfully in the footsteps of the Seraphic Father. We commend their zeal in the cause and most emphatically do We approve it; and We only wish that it may increase with time and extend, especially by your efforts, Venerable Brethren, to many others. And what We should like above all to recommend is that they who put on the insignia of the Order of Penance keep their eyes on the ideal of the holy Founder and strive to reach it; otherwise the good results expected will be nil.

Take care, therefore, to have the faithful in general understand and appreciate the Third Order. See to it that those who have the care of souls are sedulous in explaining its character, its easy conditions of

membership, its ample spiritual privileges, and its great promise of public and private advantages. Give this all the more attention, since the members of the First and Second Orders are at present suffering heavily from blows so wrongfully inflicted on them. Would that, safe in their holy Father's protection, they might soon come forth from the storm, thriving and flourishing; and would that all Christian peoples might flock to the school of the Third Order as eagerly and numerous as once they poured in from all sides in their ardent enthusiasm for Francis.

We urge this the more emphatically on the people of Italy and expect it of them with the better right, as the common need of their country and the greater share of blessings they have received from the Franciscan movement, call for greater devotion and gratitude toward Francis.

Thus, after a lapse of seven centuries, Italy as well as the rest of Christendom would find itself once more restored from turmoil unto peace, and from certain ruin unto prosperity by the offices of the *The Pope's* Poor Man of Assisi. This favor let us *Hope* with one accord supplicate of Francis, especially during these festive days. Let us seek it also at the hands of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, who ever rewarded the devotion and loyalty of her servant, Francis, with her heavenly protection and with singular favors.

Meanwhile, Venerable Brethren, as an earnest of heavenly gifts and as a special token of Our benevolence, We most lovingly in the Lord impart to you and to the entire clergy and people entrusted to each of you the Apostolic Benediction.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, the seventeenth day of September, in the year 1882, in the fifth year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII, Pope.

ENCYCLICAL

of Pope Leo XIII

Adapting the Rule of the Third Order Secular

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Leo, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, for a perpetual remembrance of the matter.

The merciful Son of God, who, by putting upon man a sweet yoke and a light burden, provided adequately for the life and salvation of all, made the Church which he founded heir not only to his power but also to his mercy, wishing that the blessings merited by Him might be ever entailed to future ages in the same even course of charity. Wherefore, just as in all things which Jesus Christ did or commanded throughout His life there was that gentle wisdom and irresistible majesty of kindness, so there appears a certain admirable strain of indulgence and leniency in the various institutions of the Christian commonwealth—and in this particular, also, the Church bears a perfect resemblance to God who is love.

Now, it is a very special function of her motherly kindness wisely to temper her laws, as far as may be, to the changes of times and manners, and to observe the utmost fairness in what she commands and exacts.

The Church's Disciplinary Policy

As a result of this wise and charitable policy, the Church contrives to unite the absolute and eternal immutability of her doctrine with a prudent alteration of her disciplinary measures. Con-

forming Our mind and heart to this tradition in the exercise of the Pontificate, We deem it Our place to take into reasonable account the nature of the times, and to be on the alert lest newly rising difficulties deter any one from the practice of useful virtues.

It has been Our pleasure to weigh by this standard that body of Franciscans known as the Third Order Secular, to determine whether it be not time to modify its laws to some extent, on account of changed conditions. That excellent institution of the Blessed Father Francis We earnestly recommended to the pious consideration of the faithful in Our encyclical letter *Auspicato* of September 17, of the past year. We published the encyclical with the sole intent and purpose, that at Our invitation as many as possible might be promptly led to aspire after the glory of Christian sanctity. For, the chief source of our present evils and impending dangers is the neglect of Christian virtue; and in no other way can mankind heal the former or avert the latter than by a speedy return, in public and in private life, to Jesus Christ, who "can save forever, all those that draw nigh through Him to God."

**Leo's Efforts
and Hopes Re-
garding Third
Order**

Now, the order of Saint Francis is based entirely on the observance of the precepts of Jesus Christ. The holy founder had no other object in view than that the order should be a kind of training ground for a more intensive practice of the Christian rule of life. As a matter of fact, the first two Franciscan orders, shaped for the practice of superior virtues, pursue a more perfect, a diviner aim. But they are open to few—

**Spirit of
the Rule**

to those, namely, who by God's favor have the grace of aspiring with a certain rare zeal to the sanctity of the evangelical counsels. The Third Order, however, is accommoda-

ted to the many, and the records of past ages as well as the nature of the order itself show how effectually it promotes justice, integrity, and religious habits.

To God, the author and promoter of every good purpose, We must give glory that the ears of the Christian public were not deaf to Our exhortation. On the contrary, from many quarters comes the report of a growing devotion to Francis of Assisi and of a general increase in the number of those seeking admittance into the Third Order. Wherefore, like one giving additional inducements to the entrants of a

**Purpose and
Scope of the
Reform**

race, We determined to devote Our attention to whatever might in any way hinder or retard this salutary course of sentiments. We soon understood that the rule of the Third Order which Our Predecessor Nicholas IV approved and confirmed by the apostolic constitution *Supra Montem* of August 18, 1289, is not in all things suited to modern times and customs. As the obligations undertaken can not be fulfilled without excessive trouble and difficulty, it has been necessary until now to dispense at the request of the members with many points of the rule. That this can not be done without detriment to general discipline, will be readily understood. Another matter concerning the association claimed Our attention. As the Roman Pontiffs who preceded Us surrounded the Third Order from its origin with their utmost favor, they granted the members many generous indulgences for the expiation of their sins. In the course of time, the extent of these indulgences has become rather uncertain; often it has been a matter of contention whether in certain cases a papal indulgence existed, and when or how it could be gained. True, there has been no lack of attention to the matter on the part of the Apostolic See. In particular, Benedict XIV, of pious memory, by the

constitution *Ad Romanum Pontificem* of March 15, 1751, took care to remove all previous doubts. But, as will happen, time has given rise to a number of others.

We were moved by the consideration of these disadvantages to appoint certain Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, chosen from the Sacred Council of Indulgences and Holy Relics, to review carefully the original rule of the Tertiaries and also to collect and examine all their indulgences and privileges. After submitting the matter to sound judgment, they were to report to Us what they thought should be retained and what changed in view of prevailing conditions.

***Extent of
the Reform***

Having done as We commanded, the Cardinals advised Us to reform the old rule and adapt it to modern modes of life by making some slight changes on certain heads. As to the indulgences—in order to leave no room for doubt and to forestall the danger of mistakes—they thought We would do wisely and well if, like Benedict XIV, We were to prescribe an entirely new list of indulgences for the order, revoking and abrogating all others.

Therefore—and may it prove a boon and a blessing, increase the glory of God, and encourage the practice of piety and of all virtues—by this letter and in virtue of Our apostolic authority, We do reform and sanction the rule of the Third Order of Franciscans, called Secular, in the manner hereinafter described. Let it not be thought, however, that thereby the nature of the order has been altered; for We wish it to remain altogether unchanged and intact. Moreover, We wish and command that the members have the right to the remission of penalties, or indulgences and to the privileges contained in the subjoined list; and that all other indulgences and privileges which the Apostolic See at any time or upon any title or under any form has hitherto granted the order, be totally suppressed.

RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER SECULAR OF ST. FRANCIS

CHAPTER I

Reception, Novitiate, and Profession

1. It is forbidden to take anyone as a member unless he is more than fourteen years of age, of good morals, of peaceable disposition, and above all exact in the practice of the Catholic religion, and of tried obedience to the Roman Church and to the Apostolic See.

2. Married women are not to be admitted without the knowledge and consent of their husbands; if it is thought necessary to act otherwise, it should be done only on the motion of the priest who is the judge of their conscience.

3. Those admitted into the order must wear the customary small scapular and the cord, else they will be deprived of the granted privileges and rights.

4. All who enter the Third Order, whether men or women, shall make a year's novitiate; then, making the profession prescribed by the Rule of the Order, they shall promise to observe the laws of God, to obey the Church, and, if they fail in their profession, to make the required satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

Mode of Life

1. Members of the Third Order will refrain from excessive cost and elegance in adornment and dress, and will observe—each according to his state—the rule of moderation.

2. They will refrain with the utmost caution from dances and from dangerous stage-plays and from all revelry.

3. They will be frugal in eating and drinking, and they will neither sit down to table nor rise from it without first devoutly and gratefully invoking God.

4. Each will fast on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and of their Father Francis; those will merit great praise who in addition, in accordance with the original rule of the Tertiaries, either fast on Fridays or abstain from flesh meat on Wednesdays.

5. Members will confess their sins each month, and will also approach the Holy Table monthly.

6. Tertiaries who are ecclesiastics, inasmuch as they read the Psalms daily, need do no more under this heading. Laymen who recite neither the canonical prayers nor the prayers in honor of Mary, commonly known as the little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, must say each day twelve "Our Fathers," "Hail Marys," and "Glorys," unless they are prevented from doing so by ill health.

7. Let those who have wills to make, dispose betimes of their property by bequest.

8. In their home life let them study to lead others by their example, to promote pious practices and all that is good. Let them not allow any books or papers from which any injury to virtue can be feared to be brought into their homes or read by those who are under their care.

9. Let them sedulously exercise kindness and charity among themselves and toward their neighbors. Let them take care to settle quarrels wherever they can do so.

10. Let them never take an oath except in case of necessity. Let them never use indecent language nor utter vulgar jokes. Let them examine their conscience every night as to whether they have perchance done anything of the kind; if they have, let them do penance for the fault.

11. Those who can conveniently do so, should assist daily at Mass. They will attend the monthly meetings called by the Prefect.

12. They will contribute—each according to his

means—to a common fund, from which the poorer members may be relieved, especially in time of sickness; or from which provision may be made for the dignity of divine worship.

13. Let the Prefects either visit in person any member who is ill, or else send some one to perform the offices of charity. When the sickness is serious, let the Prefects urge the sick person, by warning and persuasion, to attend in time to the matters which concern the purifying of his soul.

14. At the funeral of a deceased member, the Tertiaries residing in the same place, and those visiting it, should assemble and say a third part of the prayers to Mary instituted by Father Dominic—that is, the Rosary—for the heavenly comfort of the dead person. And priests, during the Holy Sacrifice, and the lay members, having approached, if possible, the Holy Eucharist, should piously and readily offer up their prayers for the eternal repose of the deceased brother.

CHAPTER III

Offices, Visitation, and Rule Itself

1. The offices are to be assigned in the meetings of the members. These offices shall be held for three years. No one can, without good reason, refuse any office tendered him, and no one is to discharge the duties of his office negligently.

2. The Curator, who is termed the Visitor, will make diligent inquiry whether the rules are observed with sufficient strictness. For this purpose he will, if possible, visit, every year or oftener, if need be, the places where fraternities are established, and will hold a meeting, which all Prefects and all members have been ordered to attend. Should the Visitor recall any member to his duty by an admonition or a command, or should he assign him any salutary penance, such

a one will modestly accept it and not refuse to perform it.

3. The Visitors are to be chosen from the First Franciscan Order, or from the Third Order Regular, and the Custodes or Guardians will select them when asked to do so. Laymen are excluded from the office of Visitor.

4. Disobedient or offending members are to be admonished of their duty three times; in the event of further disobedience, they will be bidden to leave the order.

5. Those who commit any breach of these rules, do not thereby incur the guilt of sin, except in so far as they offend also against the divine law or the laws of the Church.

6. Should there be any serious and good cause to prevent any one from observing any provisions of the rule, such person may be dispensed from that part of the rule, or the regulation may be prudently commuted. The faculty and power of granting such dispensation or commutation shall rest with the ordinary Prefects of the Franciscans of the First and Third Orders, and with the above-named Visitors.

List of Indulgences and Privileges

CHAPTER I

Plenary Indulgences

Tertiaries of either sex, having confessed their sins in accordance with the Christian rite and received the Holy Eucharist, may gain a plenary indulgence on the days and for the reasons subjoined:

1. On the day they enter the order;
2. On the day they make their first profession;
3. On the day they assemble for the monthly meeting or conference, provided they visit devoutly some church or public oratory and as usual recommend to God the welfare of the Church;

4. On October 4, the Feast of Saint Francis, their Founder and Father; on August 12, the Feast of Saint Clare, Foundress; on August 2, the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels, on account of the dedication of her basilica; also, on the solemn anniversary of the Saint in whose church the association is erected, provided they piously visit the church and recommend to God as usual the welfare of the Church;

5. Once each month, on a day of their choice, provided they visit devoutly some church or public oratory and pray for some time according to the intention of the Holy Father;

6. As often as through a desire of a more perfect life they make a retreat of eight consecutive days, devoting themselves to given meditations.

7. Also, if they, when on the point of death, call upon the holy and saving name of Jesus, either aloud or, if they have lost the use of speech, in their hearts. They have the same privilege if, when unable to confess and receive, they make an act of contrition;

8. Twice a year on receiving the Papal Blessing, if they pray some time for the intentions of the Holy Father; likewise, on the same condition of prayer, when they receive what is called the Absolution, or Indulged Blessing, on the following days: 1, The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ; 2, Easter; 3, Pentecost; 4, The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; 5, The Feast of the Immaculate Conception; 6, The Feast of Saint Joseph, March 19; 7, The Feast of the Stigmata of holy Father Francis, September 17; 8, The Feast of Saint Louis, King of France, the powerful heavenly patron of the members of the Third Order, August 25; 9, The Feast of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, November 19;

9. Also, once a month, if they recite the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary" and the "Glory" five times for the welfare of the Church and once for the intentions of the Holy Father, they shall have all the

indulgences granted to those who make the so-called Stations at Rome and the pilgrimage to Porziuncola, to the holy places in Jerusalem and to the shrine of Saint James of Compostella.

10. If, on any of the days when the Stations are marked in the Roman Missal, they pay a visit to a church or chapel where the fraternity is established and commend to God as usual the welfare of the Church, they enjoy in that church or chapel on those days the fullest extent of the privileges enjoyed by the residents or visitors of Rome.

CHAPTER II

Partial Indulgences

1. Tertiaries of either sex who visit a church or a chapel where the order is established and pray for the welfare of the Church, on the Feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis; on the Feast of Saints Louis the King, Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, Elizabeth of Hungary, Margaret of Cortona; likewise, on twelve other days of their own choice approved by the Prefect of the Order,—shall have an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines.

2. As often as they are present at Mass or other divine services, or at the meeting, public or private, of the members; or give hospitality to the poor; or compose, or help compose, quarrels; or take part in a religious procession; or accompany the Blessed Sacrament when it is carried anywhere, or, if they cannot accompany it, recite at the sound of the bell the Lord's Prayer and the Angel's Greeting once; or recite five "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" for the welfare of the Church or for the deceased members; or attend a funeral; or recall to duty one that has strayed; or instruct any one in the commandments of God and the things necessary for salvation;

or perform any such charity,—they shall have for those reasons an indulgence of three hundred days.

If they prefer, Tertiaries may apply all and each of the above-mentioned indulgences, partial and plenary, in expiation of the sins and punishments of the deceased.

CHAPTER III

Privileges

1. Priests of the Third Order have the favor of a privileged altar on three days of the week, at any altar, provided they have not obtained a similar privilege for any other day.

2. A priest offering the holy Sacrifice for the deceased associates of the order has the privilege of a plenary indulgence for the deceased at any altar.

Each and all the matters, as above decreed, shall stand, abide, and hold for all times; notwithstanding constitutions, letters apostolic, statutes, customs, privileges and other rulings of Ours or of the apostolic chancery, and all else to the contrary. Let no man, therefore, act in opposition to these Our letters in any manner or particular. Should any one dare any such infringement of these letters, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of his Apostles Blessed Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on the third of the Kalends of June (i. e., May 30), in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1883 and in the sixth year of Our Pontificate.

TH. CARD. MERTEL.

ENCYCLICAL

Of Pope Benedict XV on the Seventh Centenary of The Third Order

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction:

To the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries holding peace and communion with the Apostolic See, upon the seven hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Third Order Franciscan:

We deem it very opportune that solemn festivities should soon be held upon the seventh centenary of the founding of the Third Order of Penance, and the decided benefit which We hope will accrue to the Catholic world as well as Our own personal interest in the matter, impels Us to exalt the occasion in the eyes of Christendom with the sanction of Our apostolic authority.

The Holy Father's Interest in the Occasion

We fondly recall how, in 1882, when the enthusiasm of all the good people for the Poor Man of Assisi ran high on the occasion of the centennial celebration of his birth, We, too, wished to be enrolled among the disciples of the great Patriarch, and in due course received at Saint Mary's on the Capitol, the famous church in charge of the Friars Minor, the holy habit of the Tertiaries. Now, therefore, that God has placed Us upon the throne of the Prince of the Apostles, We gladly seize the opportunity, if only from Our devotion to Blessed Francis, to exhort the children of Mother Church,

wherever they may be, eagerly to embrace, or earnestly to persevere in, that institution of the great Saint, wonderfully suited as it is to the needs of modern society.

First of all, however, let everybody bring to mind the true character of Saint Francis. For, the man of Assisi of whom certain more recent scholars are telling—a product of the modernist workshop, little loyal to the Holy See, a would-be type of some vague and shallow religious idealism—has no right to be called either Francis or Saint. The Third Order came as a kind of climax to the illustrious and immortal services which Francis rendered Christianity, and for which he was justly styled a pillar of strength given the Church by God at a critical moment; and nothing illustrates better the extent and the intensity of his burning zeal to promote in every direction the glory of Jesus Christ. Stirred by concern at the evils which beset the Church of the day to undertake with incredible zeal the reformation of conditions according to the Christian standard, Francis founded two communities, one of men and one of women, who were bound by solemn vows to espouse the humility of the Cross; and not being able to receive into the cloister all who were drawn to him by the desire of profiting by his teaching, he conceived a plan to make the pursuit of Christian perfection possible to those who lived in the turmoil of the world, and so he founded the Order of Tertiaries, an order in the true sense of the word, not indeed bound like the other two by religious vows, but distinguished by the same simple life and practice of penance. What till then no founder of a religious order had thought of—to make the religious life common property—he was

***The Real
St. Francis***

***Genesis of
Third Order***

the first to devise and, by God's favor, successfully to accomplish, as Thomas of Celano aptly says: "Excellent master indeed, for conformably to his example, rule, and teaching the Church of Christ is gloriously reformed in either sex, and a three-fold army triumphs on the field of salvation." The testimony of this eminent contemporary, not to mention others, makes it clear how thoroughly and widely Francis stirred the masses, and how great and wholesome a change of conditions he wrought among them by means of the order. Now, as there is no room for doubt that Francis instituted the Third Order as well as the First and Second, so was he beyond doubt the author of its very wise laws. He was greatly assisted in the task, as history tells us, by Cardinal Ugolino, who later as Gregory IX adorned the Apostolic See. He, too, it was who, after being on terms of great intimacy with the Patriarch of Assisi during the latter's lifetime, enclosed his tomb in a most beautiful and magnificent temple. That the rule of the Tertiaries was duly sanctioned by the authority of Our predecessor, Nicholas IV, is a well-known fact.

We do not feel called upon, Venerable Brethren, to say any more on this subject. We are chiefly concerned to make known the nature and the proper spirit of the order from which the Church expects no less signal benefits for Christendom in modern times, so hostile to faith and virtue, than in the age of Francis. To render the rule of the Tertiaries more suited to people of every station, Our predecessor Leo XIII of happy memory, in his knowledge of the times and conditions, prudently adapted, by the constitution *Misericors Dei Filius* of 1883, their laws or rule according to the existing social conditions of society, by changing some

***Timeliness of
the Rule of
Leo XIII***

minor points which were at variance with modern customs. "But let it not be thought," he insisted, "that thereby the nature of the order has been altered, for We wish it to remain altogether unchanged and intact." The entire modification, therefore, is concerned with externals, leaving untouched the inner nature of the order, which remains what the Holy Founder intended it to be. Now, We believe that the spirit of the Third Order, thoroughly redolent of Gospel wisdom, will do very much to reform public and private morals, if only it is made to flourish as of yore when Francis preached everywhere by word and deed the Kingdom of God.

For above all things Francis wished Tertiaries to be distinguished, as by a special badge, by brotherly love, such as is keenly solicitous of peace and harmony. Knowing this to be the particular

***Franciscan
Scheme of
Peace***

precept of Jesus Christ, containing in itself the fulfilment of the Christian law, he was most anxious to conform to it the minds of his followers. By that very fact he succeeded in rendering the Third Order the greatest boon to human society. Burning with a seraphic love of God and man, Francis could not contain his charity within his bosom; he must pour it forth upon all within reach. Hence, though he began by reforming the private and domestic life of the members and adorning it with Christian virtues, as though he intended nothing else, still he had no mind to content himself with that. He employed the reformation of individuals as a means to arouse in the hearts of the people a love of Christian wisdom and to win all unto Jesus Christ. This plan of Francis, to have his Tertiaries act as heralds and messengers of peace amid the far-spread hostilities and civil upheavals of his age, We also entertained when re-

cently almost all the world was aflame with a horror-laden war; and We entertain it still, for the conflagration is not totally extinguished, rather, its embers are reeking everywhere and in some places even flaring. Coupled with this mischief is an ailment in the vitals of our governments—brought on by long-standing oblivion and contempt of Christian principles—namely, class struggling so bitterly with class about the distribution of wealth that the world is threatened with ruin.

On this immense field of action, to which We as Vicar of the King of Peace have devoted special care and thought, We desire to gather the concerted efforts of all children of Christian peace, but especially of the Tertiaries, whose influence in restoring harmony of sentiments will be something wonderful, once their number and their enterprise have generally increased. It is desirable, therefore, that every town and village and hamlet should have many members of the order—not indeed slack members, content with the mere name of Tertiaries, but active and eager for their own and their neighbor's salvation. Why should not the numerous and various associations of young people, of workmen, of women, existing everywhere throughout the Catholic world, join the Third Order, and inspired with St. Francis's zeal for peace and charity devote themselves persistently to the glory of Christ and the prosperity of the Church? Mankind needs not the sort of peace that is built up on the laborious deliberations of worldly prudence, but that peace which was brought to us by Christ when he declared, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, do I give unto you." A man-made treaty, whether of states or of classes among themselves, can neither endure nor have at all the value of real

peace, unless it rests upon a peaceful disposition; but the latter can exist only where duty, as it were, puts the bridle on the passions, for it is they that give rise to discord of whatever kind. "From whence," asks the Apostle, "are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence from your concupiscences which war in your members?" Now, it is Christ who avails to harmonize all that is in man, making him, not serve, but command his desires, obedient and submissive always to the will of God; and this harmony is the foundation of all peace.

In the Order of Franciscan Tertiaries, that power of Christ displays itself to wonderful effect. For since, as We have pointed out, the order has the special object of disciplining its members, though occupied with worldly cares, in Christian perfection—for sanctity is not incompatible with any mode or walk of life—it follows of necessity that, where a number of people live in keeping with the rule, they will be a powerful incentive to all their neighbors, not only to comply with every detail of duty, but to aspire to a more perfect aim in life than the general law requires. The praise, therefore, which Christ Our Lord bestowed on the disciples who followed him in a special manner, when he said, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world"—this praise is well merited by the children of Francis who, observing the evangelical counsels with mind and heart as far as that can be done in the world, can truly say of themselves with the Apostle, "We have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God."

Wherefore, keeping as far as possible from the spirit of the world, they will rather seek to introduce, wherever they can effect an entrance, the spirit

of Jesus Christ into everyday affairs. Now, there are two evils which predominate in the great moral subversion of today: a boundless craze for possession and an insatiable thirst for pleasure. It is these vices especially that attach to our age the shame and blame that, while making steady progress in all that pertains to the convenience and comfort of life, in a more important matter—the duty of

***Tertiaries and
Class Strife***

good and upright living—it seems to be miserably backsliding to the infamies of pagan antiquity. Naturally; for the more clouded becomes man's vision of the eternal blessings laid up in heaven, the more do the transitory goods of earth entice and enslave him. Once the mind has turned earthward, however, it is liable to become gradually weak and dull, and loathing things spiritual, ultimately to lose the taste for anything but the delights of passion. Hence we find that there is on the one hand no limit to the quest and the enlargement of fortunes, and on the other a lack of olden patience with the annoyances that usually go hand in hand with want and poverty; and to the strife already existing, as we have said, between the proletariat and the wealthy, there comes on the part of so many the lavish care of the body, joined with absolutely base license, to render more keen the enviousness of the poorer classes.

In this connection we can not deplore enough the blindness of so many women of every age and rank who, seized with a mad desire to please, do not realize how greatly their insane fashions, not

***Tertiaries and
Fashions***

only displease every decent person, but offend God as well. Not content with appearing publicly in such apparel, from which most of them once would have shrunk in horror as being too repugnant to Chris-

tian decency, they are not abashed to enter church in it and to attend divine services; yes, they bear with them to the very Eucharistic Table, where the divine Author of purity is received, the trappings of shameful passions. We refrain from mentioning the forms of dancing, one worse than the other, recently fetched in from barbarism, to be the fashion with cultured people, than which nothing could be more apt to banish all modesty.

Let our Tertiaries give these matters their serious attention, and they will understand what the age expects of them as followers of Francis. It is for them to study the life of their Father; to consider

***Call of the Age
on Tertiaries***

his close and marked resemblance to Jesus Christ, especially in the way he fled the comforts of the world and undertook suffering, meriting for himself the name of the Poverello and receiving in his body the wounds of the Crucified; to show that they have not degenerated from his ideal, by embracing poverty at least of the spirit, by mortifying themselves, and by carrying their crosses. It is the special duty of our Tertiary sisters to be in their apparel and their whole manner of life an object lesson of holy modesty to other maids and matrons. Let them be assured they can render no better service to Church or State than by paving the way for the reformation of corrupt morals. If the members of the order have organized various methods of benevolence to help the needy in their manifold wants, they will, like real brothers, surely not be guilty of withholding the offices of their charity from those who are in need of far greater than earthly things. Here We are put in mind of the words of Saint Peter, calling the Christians to be an example to the heathens by a holy life, that "they may by the good works which they shall be-

hold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation." So shall our Franciscan Tertiaries by purity of faith, by innocence of life, and by cheerful zeal diffuse far and wide the good odor of Christ, and be to the brethren that have gone astray both a reminder and an invitation to come to a sense of their duties. This the Church asks, this she expects of them.

For Our part, We trust the Third Order will receive a notable increase from the coming festivities; and We have no doubt that you, Venerable Brethren, and all pastors of souls, will devote great care to

Appeal to the Clergy revive the Tertiary fraternities where they may be declining, to establish new fraternities wherever possible, and to have them all flourish in observance as well as membership. When all is said, it is a question of opening to as many as possible, by following Francis, the path and the return to Christ, on which return reposes Our best hope of general salvation. The words of Saint Paul: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ," we may justly apply to Francis, who by following Christ has become His most perfect image and likeness.

Wherefore, that the festivities may prove the more beneficial, We do, at the humble entreaty of the Ministers General of the three families of the First Order, bestow the following bounties from the treasury of Holy Church:

Privileges for the Centenary 1. In all churches where Tertiary fraternities are lawfully established, during the triduum to be held in commemoration of the centenary at any time throughout the year beginning on the sixteenth day of next April, Third Order members may each day, and others may once, gain a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions; while all who with a contrite heart

visit the Blessed Sacrament in such churches, may gain an indulgence of seven years *toties quoties*.

2. All altars of said churches shall be privileged during those days; also, during the triduum any priest may there celebrate the mass of Saint Francis as a votive mass *pro re gravi et simul publica de causa*, observing the general rubrics of the Roman Missal as contained in the latest Vatican edition.

3. All priests attached to said churches may during those days bless rosaries, medals, and similar articles with the papal indulgences; likewise, they may bless the Crosier and Brigittine beads.

As a pledge of divine favor and a mark of Our benevolence, We most lovingly grant you, Venerable Brethren, and all members of the Third Order the apostolic benediction.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the Epiphany of Our Lord, in the year 1921, the seventh year of Our Pontificate.

BENEDICT XV, Pope.



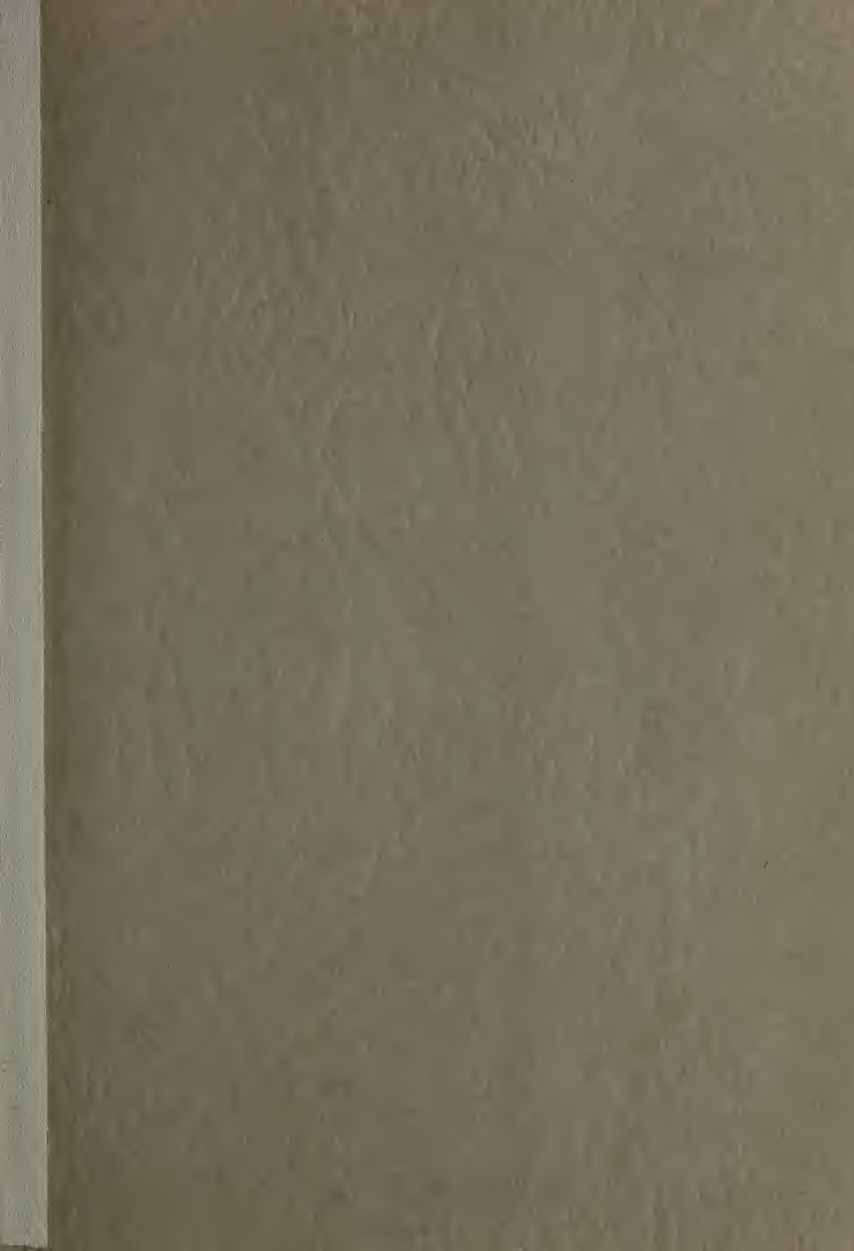
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